



**UNITED STATES
DIVISION – CENTER**
Media Release



HQ, USD-Center
Camp Liberty
Baghdad, Iraq
APO AE 09344
Commercial: (703) 253-9053

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE No. 20100207-03

February 7, 2010

All American devil paratroopers train for coming mass Airborne jump in Iraq

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1/82 AAB PAO, USD-C

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – “Black hat” instructors from the U.S. Army’s elite Advanced Airborne School refreshed the parachuting skills of paratroopers here Feb. 5 to prepare them for a tactical airborne exercise soon to follow.

Three jumpmaster instructors from the Fort Bragg parachuting school recently traveled to Camp Ramadi, where they taught a one-day basic airborne skills refresher course to paratroopers of 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade).

“You want to knock the dust off [airborne] skills and bring them to the level of proficiency where they need to be,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Shultz, air movement operations committee chief for the Advanced Airborne School and lead instructor conducting the training at Camp Ramadi.

“It’s a perishable skill, like marksmanship or physical training. It’s something you need to be on top of all the time,” he said.

Instructors led the paratroopers in a series of exercises, simulating every movement that a paratrooper must make before, during and after a jump to exercise muscle memory, said Shultz.

Paratroopers practiced parachute landing falls – a way to safely roll when landing to dissipate the energy of impact. They also received a brief on how to exit the aircraft under various scenarios, and then practiced mass exiting from a training apparatus; designed to simulate a C-130 aircraft.

The last skill paratroopers reviewed was rigging their packs with a harness that allows them to lower their packs to the ground before they land, preventing injury and protecting equipment.

“To get these guys out here touching their equipment – rigging their stuff up, putting their parachute on – makes them feel like paratroopers again,” said Schultz. “They’re out here [in Iraq] doing different things.”

Sgt. Brandon Reynolds, a mortarman with 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, is looking forward to the jump. A paratrooper since 2006, Reynolds said he loves being a paratrooper with the 82nd because of the high standards of soldiering they uphold.

“It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity to come out here and jump and show the Iraqis exactly what an airborne division can do,” he said.

The legacy unit of 1/82 AAB, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, has five jumps into combat zones under its belt, including four during World War II and one into Panama in 1989.

If executed as planned, the 1/82 AAB training exercise could be the largest mass parachute jump into a combat zone since the paratroopers of 173rd Airborne Brigade dropped onto Bashur Airfield in northern Iraq March 26, 2003; a combat jump known as Operation Northern Delay.

According to the 173rd Web site, nearly 1,000 paratroopers took part in that operation. More than 500 devil paratroopers are expected to jump at this one.



100205-A-3108M-004

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Dirt flies off a paratroopers boots as he finishes a parachute landing fall with other paratroopers of 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade), stationed at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Feb. 5, 2010. The paratroopers are participating in a basic airborne refresher course being taught by instructors visiting from Fort Bragg's Advanced Airborne School in preparation for airborne exercises later the same month. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael J. MacLeod, 1/82 AAB, USD-C)



100205-A-3108M-005

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Timothy Rojas, a jumpmaster instructor with Fort Bragg's Advanced Airborne School, describes the proper way to grip a universal static line as Staff Sgt. Victor Vasquez, also a jumpmaster instructor, demonstrates to a group of paratroopers with 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade), stationed at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Feb. 5, 2010. Along with Sgt. 1st Class Robert Schultz (not pictured), the instructors are teaching a refresher course on basic airborne skills for upcoming training jumps. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael J. MacLeod, 1/82 AAB, USD-C)



100205-A-3108M-006

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Paratroopers with 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade), stationed at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, hold static lines and pretend to sit in seats inside a mock-door trainer that mimics the cargo hold of a C-130 airplane used for airborne operations Feb. 5, 2010. Keeping current on airborne skills is a constant part of a paratrooper's training. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael J. MacLeod, 1/82 AAB, USD-C)



100205-A-3108M-007

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Sgt. Tige Phyfer, an infantry team leader with 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade), follows a jumpmaster instructor's instructions during mock-door training as part of a basic airborne skills refresher course Feb. 5, 2010, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq. Phyfer served with the Marine Corps prior to becoming a paratrooper with the U.S. Army. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael J. MacLeod, 1/82 AAB, USD-C)



100205-A-3108M-010

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Victor Vasquez, a jumpmaster instructor with Fort Bragg's Advanced Airborne School, describes how to properly fit protective padding in a paratrooper's helmet prior to jumping Feb. 5, 2010, during a basic airborne skills refresher course he and other instructors are teaching to paratroopers with 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade), stationed at Camp Ramadi, Iraq. The paratroopers are preparing for an airborne training exercise later the same month in Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael J. MacLeod, 1/82 AAB, USD-C)



100205-A-3108M-011

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – As “black hat” jumpmaster instructor Staff Sgt. Victor Vasquez watches, a paratrooper with 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade), helps to attach a reserve parachute to a fellow jumper’s parachute harness, Feb. 5, 2010, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq. Vasquez is part of a three-man team from Fort Bragg’s Advanced Airborne School that is traveling to major U.S. bases in Al Anbar province to freshen paratroopers’ airborne skills prior to training jumps to take place later the same month. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael J. MacLeod, 1/82 AAB, USD-C)



100205-A-3108M-012

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Sgt. Ian Prescott, a paratrooper with 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade), prepares a harness single-point release for his MOLLE (modular lightweight load-carrying equipment), a type of backpack, during a basic airborne skills refresher course being taught by instructors from Fort Bragg's Advanced Airborne School Feb. 5, 2010, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq. The harness single-point release will allow him to lower his pack to the ground prior to his own impact to prevent injury to himself or his equipment. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael J. MacLeod, 1/82 AAB, USD-C)